District Celebrates Excellence in Education, Names Five Top Winners

During a lively celebration Feb. 4, more than 600 guests gathered to honor the district’s 46 Excellence in Education finalists at the Hoover High School Event Center. Five outstanding educators were announced as the top winners:

- **Classified category** – Annette Montague, executive assistant for School Leadership
- **Certificated category, elementary** – Ivette Jauregui, Leavenworth Elementary School teacher
- **Certificated category, middle school** – Christine Felder, Sequoia Middle School teacher
- **Certificated category, high school** – Benjamin Akioyame, Hoover High School teacher
- **Administrator category** – Rebecca Wheeler, Hoover High School principal

Montague, Jauregui and Wheeler will move on to the Fresno County Educator of the Year awards process. Winners are announced in November.

Finalists were nominated by their peers for their exemplary work for students and the district. The finalists included teachers, health assistants, principals, office assistants and campus safety assistants doing a wide variety of work. But all shared a love for their jobs and a desire to connect with students and families and make a difference in their community. They sought new ways to help Fresno Unified students succeed at school and in life. The top educators were highly valued by their colleagues for their skills in working with colleagues, families and the community.

Executive assistant Annette Montague reacts to the announcement Feb. 4 that she is the Excellence in Education winner in the classified category. At right is Misty Her, an instructional superintendent.

**Measure M on March Ballot**

Measure M is a $325 million facilities bond on the March 3 ballot. It would provide locally controlled funding for Fresno Unified schools to help prepare students for college and careers in fields like health sciences, engineering, technology, manufacturing and skilled trades. Funding is needed to modernize and maintain district schools, two-thirds of which were built before 1970.
Applications for High Quality After School Programs Available Soon

Fresno Unified and Fresno County Superintendent of Schools operate daily comprehensive after school programs at 58 elementary schools across the district. Applications for the 2020-21 school year are available starting on March 25.

Applications are available at the elementary sites listed at right. The application deadline is April 24.

All students from each of the 58 school sites, from transitional kindergarten/ kindergarten through sixth grade, are eligible to apply. Programs operate on school days from dismissal until 6 p.m. Capacity is limited and enrollment is determined through a lottery system.

Parents of students who are accepted into the program will be notified via letter from school or by phone in May and will be required to attend a mandatory orientation. Students who are not selected during the lottery process are placed on a waiting list and will be notified at a later date when space becomes available. For additional questions or information, contact the school site.

After school programs are funded by the state’s After School Education & Safety Program and the federal 21st Century Learning Community Center grants. They are an extension of the regular school day, offering academic enrichment aligned with the regular school day core programs.

Students receive academic and literacy support through assistance with homework in language arts and math. The enrichment component includes a variety of activities to engage students in new opportunities, such as community service learning, recreation and physical activities, science and technology, career awareness and other activities based on student interests.

The Fresno Unified Nutrition Center provides two healthy snacks each day for students participating in the after school program.

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The Fresno Unified Nutrition Center provides two healthy snacks each day for students participating in the after school program.

After School Program Sites
Sitios del Programa Después de Clases

Lub Thawv Muab Lus Qhia

Las Solicitudes de Programas Después de Clases estarán Disponibles Pronto
Fresno Unificado y el Superintendente de Escuelas del Condado de Fresno (FCSS) operan diariamente programas completos de después de clases en 58 escuelas primarias en todo el distrito.

Solicitudes para el año escolar 2020-21 están disponibles a partir del 25 de marzo.

Los programas operan en días escolares desde la salida hasta las 6 p.m. La capacidad es limitada y la inscripción se determina a través de un sistema de lotería.

El Centro de Nutrición de Fresno Unificado ofrece dos bocadillos saludables cada día para los estudiantes que participan en el programa después de clases.

Cov Ntawv Thov rau Cov Kev Kawm Tom Qab Lawb Ntawv Muaj Sai Sai
Fresno Unified thiab Fresno County Superintendent of Schools provide two healthy snacks each day for students participating in the after school program. Applications for next year’s after school program will be available starting March 25.
Celebrating Black History and Excellence in Education Finalists

Happy March all! Last month was full of so much celebration, I have to take a moment to brag on our people! First, we celebrated African American History Month across the district and I couldn’t be prouder of the amazing learning and events put on by our students, staff, and teams all around our district.

One of my favorite events is Gaston Middle School’s annual Black History Month Program, now in its sixth year. If you’ve never been to this program, you are truly missing out on one of the best celebrations in our community. Our students packed the house at the historic Warnor’s Theater and put on a breathtaking show. Students and staff from all around the Edison region celebrated black history through powerful performances highlighting everything from pharaohs, to The Green Book, to Motown, to sports and much more. If you were present, you know how touching each performance really was from incredible singers, beautiful dancers, and amazing acting. Our students had us clapping, singing, dancing, and beaming with pride. Great job to our students and staff for expanding our entire community’s world view of the elements that make up black history.

Last month we also celebrated our annual Excellence in Education awards banquet where we honored 46 incredible staff members selected five winners, three of whom will be moving on to the Fresno County Educator of the Year Awards. The 46 finalists this year represented so many amazing and crucial pieces to the puzzle that is Fresno Unified. Without these folks, our district would not be what it is today. We celebrated teachers, principals, vice principals, counselors, directors, managers, speech therapists, coaches, folks from special education, early learning, curriculum, human resources and so much more. These folks serve our students, our staff, our facilities, our parents, and our community in such vital ways.

Message from Retired Principal Russ Painter

Excellence in Education Shines a Light on the Hard Work of Educators

February is the month where we celebrate our American Presidents – namely Abraham Lincoln and George Washington. But in the education community it is also the month where we annually recognize Excellence in Education finalists and winners from Fresno Unified School District. Having been on both sides of this process I can tell you that Excellence in Education provides for internal reflection and external inspiration! For the finalists, it’s an opportunity to take a moment and reflect on accomplishments and their impact. As educators, we spend most of our time laboring in anonymity to the greater community, happily “planting seeds” with our students. In many cases we don’t ever know where or when those “seeds” blossom. The Excellence in Education process allows outstanding administrators, teachers and classified personnel, nominated by their peers, to step back for a moment and consider the effective practices they employ. As they are interviewed by a panel of educators and community members, they are given the opportunity to talk about their accomplishments and their impact on their school community. In many cases, their impact spreads throughout our community. It is awesome for them to be noticed and recognized for their passion for the job they do each day!

For those attending this wonderful evening, it’s an opportunity to be inspired by these outstanding educators and join in celebrating the district as a whole.

Even better – every one of those honored this year go above and beyond to serve others in their daily roles. So much so that their peers took the time to nominate them and tell their great stories of making a true difference in our system. I’m not sure there is any better recognition than that which comes from your teammates. Your team sees you every day – on your great days and your rough days. And through all of that, our teams thought of these 46 people when it came time to nominate folks for these awards. Let’s not walk by what a huge honor and testament this is to the work these finalists are doing on behalf of kids every day.

Of this stellar group, we named five winners:

- Annette Montague, Classified Employee of the Year
- Benjamin Akiyame, High School Educator of the Year
- Christine Felder, Middle School Educator of the Year

See SUPT. MESSAGE SPANISH AND HMONG Continued on page 15
2020 Excellence in Education Winners

For More About the Excellence in Education Awards, See Page 1

**Annette Montague**

*Classified Employee of the Year*

**Job:** Administrative Assistant II, Confidential for School Leadership

**Stands out because:** Montague, a 26-year veteran of several departments, can be relied upon to be calm, collected and confident, even during challenging situations and crises. As the executive assistant in the School Leadership Office, she works directly with school sites as well as families and community members. She understands that many families have trouble navigating the district’s system. She has a sense of urgency to solve problems, especially when they directly involve a child’s education. Her sincere concern and caring for district families, community members and her colleagues is evident. Those around her rely on her knowledge, advice and support, knowing she is the voice of reason and a problem solver. She holds herself and others to high standards and is always positive. She has exceptional work ethic. She has worked in Human Resources, high school, middle school and elementary school leadership and alternative education, and since 1997 in the School Leadership Office. Her hobbies include reading, sewing, crocheting, jigsaw puzzles and bowling. Annette has been married for 37 years. She had one daughter, who passed away in 2017.

**From Montague:** “I always tell parents, ‘Every child can succeed. We just have to find the right avenue.’”

— Annette Montague

For video, go to vimeo.com/fresnounified/eimontague

**Ivette Jauregui**

*Elementary Educator of the Year*

**Job:** Third grade dual immersion teacher at Leavenworth Elementary School

**Stands out because:** Jauregui is dedicated to making sure all students meet and exceed their potential, both academically and socially emotionally. She helps native Spanish speakers and English speakers acquiring a second language achieve their goals of being bilingual and biliterate, while promoting positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors in her classroom. Jauregui is a passionate educator with high expectations for herself and her students, who she calls “my college students.” She has a highly collaborative classroom where students are expected to engage in rich discussions and support each other’s learning. As part of a highly successful group of dual immersion teachers at Leavenworth, she has deep knowledge of effective instructional practices and excellent leadership skills. She is always looking to improve her skills and support her colleagues’ growth.

Jauregui was born in Mexico and came to the United States when she was 11, facing many challenges. She was the first in her family to graduate from college. She enjoys soccer, running and cycling. She is married to Alfredo Jauregui and they have three children: Miranda 12, Sebastian 6, and Natalia 3. Jauregui has been with the district for seven years, all at Leavenworth.

**From Jauregui:** “The power of teamwork is extremely important.”

— Ivette Jauregui

For video, go to vimeo.com/fresnounified/eijauregui

**Christine Felder**

*Middle School Educator of the Year*

**Job:** P.E. teacher at Sequoia Middle School

**Stands out because:** Felder communicates her belief in students in how she speaks with them every day. She is patient and kind while maintaining high expectations for student learning. She is coaching four sports this school year — girls volleyball, girls soccer, baseball and boys volleyball. Not surprisingly, her teams have won numerous city championships over the years. But most importantly, her student athletes learn how to contribute to a team while working on personal skills. Felder also organizes and runs the intramural program, giving students an opportunity to be active and involved during lunch. She and her partner seventh grade teachers have developed a model for P.E. instruction that incorporates literacy, teamwork and critical thinking, leading to nearly 100 percent participation. Felder is a vital member of the Culture and Climate Team, developing programs and initiatives that help students be successful academically, socially and emotionally. She enjoys running, working out and spending time with her family. Felder was a Division I athlete in softball at New Mexico State. She is married to Reg Felder, a teacher at Sunnyside High School, and has four children. Mya (20) attends University of Oregon and plays softball, Taja (18), attends University of Louisville and plays softball, and Kado (15) and Dalen (13) attend Sequoia Middle School. Felder has worked for the district since 2007, all at Sequoia.

**From Felder:** “The greatest challenge is to meet students where they are right now.”

— Christine Felder

For video, go to vimeo.com/fresnounified/eiefelder

"The power of teamwork is extremely important." — Ivette Jauregui
Benjamin Akioyame  
**High School Educator of the Year**

**Job:** History teacher at Hoover High School  
**Stands out because:** Akioyame is constantly striving to provide students with the opportunity to learn in a variety of ways, giving them options to help them personalize their own learning. He works hard to elevate students who are often far below grade level and teaches skills that will help students outside of the classroom. Students participate in lectures, debates and discussions. They make newspapers about the Industrial Revolution and comics about the Cold War, analyze political cartoons, create propaganda posters for World War II and reenact an industrial assembly line. They create scripts and poems and analyze music and poetry and apply them to a time period. Akioyame and his fellow history teachers have developed lessons that help students understand how choices and events can change history, and how their own choices and actions will also have consequences. He is also the Black Student Union adviser, the boys tennis coach and assistant girls tennis coach. He is a 2012 graduate of Hoover High School. Akioyame likes to play video games, play tennis and basketball, go to the gym, play the drums and bass, listen to music, go outdoors, and has more than 50 pairs of sneakers, which has helped him connect with a lot of his students. He has been married to Jocelyn, a teacher at Lowell Elementary School, for five months. He has been with the district since 2017, all at Hoover High.

*I make sure my kids figure out what they are passionate about.* — Benjamin Akioyame

Rebecca Wheeler  
**Administrator of the Year**

**Job:** Principal at Hoover High School  
**Stands out because:** Wheeler demonstrates every day that she truly believes all students can learn. She also shows that she values the Hoover staff and is always looking for ways to help staff members grow as leaders and teachers by encouraging professional development. She has fostered a sense of community on the Hoover campus, and encouraged collaboration between colleagues. She values the voice of students, parents and the community. Wheeler recognizes the value of data and educational research and will find a program that she thinks will work at Hoover, start a pilot, gather data and share the results. She actively seeks solutions to issues on campus and is immersed in all aspects. She is proactive, not reactive. Wheeler enjoys reading, cooking and watching cable news. She is married to Eric Wheeler, a teacher librarian at Sunnyside High School. She has three children: Emma Nalchajian is a teacher at Roosevelt High School and twins Nora and Adele are ninth graders at Edison High School. Wheeler has been with the district since 1997 and principal at Hoover for six years.

*I want to create a healthy place for kids with hope and civic responsibility.* — Rebecca Wheeler

From Wheeler: “I want to create a healthy place for kids with hope and civic responsibility.”  
From Kat Tibbetts, a special education resource specialist: “Mrs. Wheeler is committed to educating the youth of our future.”

For video, go to vimeo.com/fresnounified/eiewheeler

For More About the Excellence in Education Awards, See Page 1

**EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT**

2020 Excellence in Education Winners

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Interested in Placing an Ad?  
Directly mailed to more than 155,000 residences and businesses in Fresno Unified  
For more information about placing an ad, call (559) 457-3733

www.FresnoUnified.org | PREPARING CAREER READY GRADUATES |
Design Science Takes Third at Academic Decathlon

Members of the Design Science Middle College High School Academic Decathlon team celebrate after placing third overall and third in the Super Quiz in the 38th annual Fresno County Academic Decathlon Feb. 1, the school’s best finish. University High School took first and Sanger High School placed second overall out of 28 teams at Central High School East. Edison High School’s Vanessa Pastlan won the first place Dean’s Award and a scholarship of $1,250 with 8,547 points. In overall individual scores in the Honors Division, Edison’s Alexander Fischer placed first, Design Science’s Paige Dote second and Design Science’s Daniel Arango 10th. Academic Decathlon teams consist of students of varying grade point averages who compete in categories such as essay, language, literature, mathematics, science and interview. The theme this year was “In Sickness and Health: An Exploration of Wellness and Illness.”

Online Registration is Now Available

Parents and guardians of Fresno Unified students in kindergarten through sixth grade can now register students online.

Parents/guardians can enter student information and securely upload documents, when and where it is most convenient for them.

Registration information is sent to the school the student will attend, based on their address. Online registration is available in English, Spanish, and Hmong.

Parents/guardians can register students by visiting the Parents section of the district website at fresnouified.org, and choosing ‘How to Enroll.’ Online enrollment for early learning and grades 7-12 is expected in the next school year.

Paper forms will still be available for parents without computer or internet access.

Historic Day for Strings Musicians in Sunnyside Region

The Sunnyside Regional Strings Day on Feb. 11 brought together all elementary and middle school orchestra students in the region to play with Sunnyside High School musicians, with 250 students performing together. While this was the third year for Strings Day, this was the first year that all music programs in the region participated. The event is an exciting opportunity for students to learn from each, develop regional pride and increase collaboration among programs. The event was in the Sunnyside High gym. “Strings Day was a unique opportunity to hear all these wonderful musicians in one combined orchestra,” said Superintendent Bob Nelson.
Edison High's Tiger Giving Closet Provides Free Clothes, Supplies

Edison High School held its first pop-up event on Feb. 13 to highlight the new Tiger Giving Closet, which provides students with free school and business clothes, shoes, hygiene items, formal wear and backpacks with supplies.

The Giving Closet was a three-year labor of love for various staff members at Edison. Pop-up events will be held every other Thursday at lunch time in the student quad to encourage students to take advantage of the Giving Closet. The closet will also be available based on a referral system.

The community can donate to the Tiger Giving Closet by bringing gently used, clean adult clothing to the Edison front office. New hygiene products are also needed.

In preparation for prom, the school held a formal wear drive at the George Brown fitness club in February. The school will also accept formal wear donations at the campus.

Students will model fashions from the formal wear drive at a Just for You Fashion Show on March 19. The event will begin with a living models art installation at 4:30 p.m., followed by the fashion show at 5:30 in the cafeteria. Formal wear donations will be available at pop-up events and from the Tiger Giving Closet.

“The Tiger Giving Closet provides help to students who need clothing, or hygiene items or school supplies through fun, pop-up events that encourage schoolwide involvement. Thank you to a number of Edison staff members who worked extremely hard to get this off the ground,” said Superintendent Bob Nelson.

District Provides Free Hotspots to Students to Improve Internet Access

Fresno Unified began rolling out a pilot project that provides free mobile hotspots to selected students to ensure they have internet access for their schoolwork.

Project Connect, in partnership with Sprint and its 1Million Project Foundation, will provide 1,000 hotspots this school year. The partnership was announced Jan. 23 in the Fresno High School library, where students received hotspot devices.

With seven out of 10 high school teachers across the nation assigning online homework, free internet access to disadvantaged students is critical to their success.

“Bringing free internet access to our students is crucial to their continued success. All of our campuses offer Wi-Fi, and with these devices, along with the tablets that we provided to our students, we will enhance the resources they have to be academically and online prepared,” said Superintendent Bob Nelson.

Hoover Students Earn Certification in Solar Installation

Hoover High School students from the Construction Technology career pathway work on solar panel installation skills and finalizing their certification as solar installers on Feb. 7, preparing them to be qualified immediately for jobs in the solar industry. From left is Hoover student Lorence Rios, Eric Cortez from Grid Alternatives and Hoover students Efrain Santiago and Elias Taboada.
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Kratt Sixth Grader Takes Bite out of Spelling Bee with 'Mandible'

When the spell master gave sixth-grader Luke Moore his final word, he straightened up and squared his shoulders with confidence: “M A N D I B L E. Mandible.”

“I said to myself, ’I know this word,’’” said Luke, recounting the last few moments of Fresno Unified’s annual elementary spelling bee on Feb. 5. The Kratt Elementary School student came away with the first-place trophy, a $500 check from vocabulary.com and a $100 gift certificate to Barnes & Noble.

He edged out fifth-grader Amayah Nutt from Thomas Elementary School. The two both missed several words down the stretch as they battled for the victory at Fresno High School’s Royce Hall. Callie Nelson from Manchester GATE Elementary School placed third. This year, 82 spellers in grades 4-6 from 28 schools competed.

Luke and Amayah will compete March 17 in the Fresno County Spell-Off at Fresno State. Afterwards, Luke and parents Lainie and John Moore and younger brother Jack celebrated with hamburgers at Colorado Grill and then Luke went home and took a nap before returning to school for wrestling practice.

“It was fun, but I was really nervous,” Luke said.

He admitted that he was never able to shake the tension, even after the competition got underway: “I was just wringing my hands the whole time.”

The 4.0 student prepared by studying root words, prefixes and suffixes. Luke has a large vocabulary already because he loves to read.

“My constantly needing new books,” he said, and looks forward to shopping at Barnes & Noble. His current favorite books are from the fantasy series, “Wings of Fire.”

When Luke returned to his classroom and teacher Anna Jierian the next day, his classmates greeted him with a congratulatory card and applause.

Jierian said she enjoys watching Luke’s mind work: “He is able to see things in a more out of the box and analytical way. When he was studying for the spelling bee, he told me he did so while playing chess, which I thought was fascinating. He had the foresight to understand that it would make his mind sharper and used it as a way to push himself to become better each time he practiced.”

She also said Luke is a wonderful student and classmate.

“He is kind and respectful but most of all a hard worker,” Jierian said.

Community partners for the spelling bee were ABC30, the Fresno County Superintendent’s Office and The Fresno Bee. The spell master was Corin Hoggard from ABC30.

Fort Miller Middle School Student Excelling with Parents' Support

“Always loud and busy.” That’s how Roberto Azua Jr., an eighth grader at Fort Miller Middle School, describes his house.

But behind the noise and flurry of activity, he is fortunate to have a mom who makes family meals a priority and who, along with his dad, works hard to provide for their four children and to motivate them to achieve their goals and make their dreams come true. His parents are Roberto and Mescina Azua.

For Roberto, one of those dreams is to travel to Washington, D.C. in July with the Chicano@ Latinx Americanx Student Association (CLASA). About 15 students from Fort Miller are planning to be part of the trip.

Through CLASA, which meets every Tuesday, Roberto and other members work on their communication skills and social awareness. They also host cultural activities on campus and engage parents through workshops.

They are committed to helping others by volunteering monthly at the local community food bank and have traveled to the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles and attended conferences on Chicano history, wellness, art and expression.

Field trips are important for learning for students like Roberto, who has not had the opportunity to experience many places beyond the valley.

“This trip will help me in many ways because I can see new things, learn new things, visit different places. This trip means the world to me, I want to go because we usually don’t get to travel,” Roberto said.

Roberto is busy helping to raise money for the $2,200 trip. He said he is grateful that his parents are making sacrifices to help him be part of the trip.

“My parents work hard; I hardly get to see them. My dad works nights and my mom works mornings. They put a roof over my head, feed me, and support me and they help me in every way they can,” Roberto said, with tears in his eyes.

Fort Miller Middle School eighth grader Roberto Azua Jr. says his parents, Mescina and Roberto Sr., work hard to make their children’s dreams come true.

Along with CLASA, Robert was also on the football and soccer teams. He was recognized as Student of the Year for Mathematics last school year.
Message from the Fresno County Complete Count Committee

Get ready for Census Day

You may have seen messages about the 2020 Census. That’s because April 1, 2020 is Census Day. This is the day that marks the count of the entire U.S. population. When you fill out your census questionnaire you are stating where you live on Census Day.

Remember, when it comes to the census, everyone counts. Count all children living at your address to ensure children are not undercounted like in the 2010 Census. Don’t forget to include babies born on or before April 1, 2020, nieces, nephews, grandchildren, foster children and people not related to you, like a friend or any other child, if they are living with you on April 1, 2020.

This count only happens every 10 years and is the only official population count in the country. By participating you are making a difference in your community and making history.

When you fill out the census and count everyone at your address, you also help decide how much money our community will receive for the next 10 years. This includes programs that support your loved ones: schools, child-care, medical care, food assistance, housing, and public transportation.

Filling out the census form for your household is easy. It will only take about 10 minutes. You can respond to the census online, by phone or by mail. You can even do it on your smartphone! Visit 2020census.gov on April 1, 2020.

¡Cuentese en el censo de 2020!

Un conteo completo garantiza la financiación para escuelas, calles, hospitales, centros de cuidado infantil, centros de ancianos, cuerpos de bomberos y otros recursos comunitarios.

Asegúrese de que todos en su hogar sean contados. El censo ayuda a financiar la escuela y los recursos de su hijo para su éxito. Si participa en el censo, usted ayuda a determinar cómo se asignan cada año más de $675 mil millones en recursos del gobierno federal.

Empezando el marzo de 2020, se recomienda a todos los hogares que completen un formulario de censo en sitio web, por teléfono o por correo. Con su ayuda podemos asegurar un conteo preciso y completo para todos.

Cooper Academy Cooking Club Makes Valentine's Day Lunch for School Staff

The Cooper Academy Cooking Club served up some love on Valentine’s Day to their teachers and the school staff.

To show their appreciation for all that the Cooper staff does for students, club members prepared a lunch that included asada tacos, lemon pepper chicken and quesadillas.

“They were excited to cook as a thank you to the staff,” said Cooper math teacher Pedro Enriquez, adviser to the club. Enriquez, who loves to cook, started the club this school year. Students meet every Friday at lunch. With only about half an hour, Enriquez has focused on teaching cooking techniques and about proportions and measurements through easy recipes such as pico de gallo and grilled cheese sandwiches. After school, club members tackle more complicated food to sell at various events.

The club is teaching them how to make items they could prepare at home, Enriquez said. It also provides another way to connect students to school outside the classroom, aligning with the district goal to involve all students in arts, activities or athletics.

Enriquez said he has enjoyed “getting to know the kids on a different level.”

Marisol Robinson, a member of Cooper Academy’s Cooking Club, shows off what the group is about to serve to the Cooper staff to honor them on Valentine’s Day.

Program Offers Academic Support for African American Students

Tehipiite Middle School teacher Umar Alfa works with Pharaoh Briggs Jan. 28 as part of a new academic program through the Office of African American Academic Acceleration. The African American Academic Advisory Program provides deeper, more consistent and rigorous monitoring of academics for African American middle and high school students. Academic advisers are available at participating middle and high schools.
District Students Honor, Celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Below, Joseph McCoy Jr. from King Elementary School performs the East Coast Swing during "The Foundation of Hip Hop" segment of Gaston Middle School’s sixth annual Black History Month program at Warnor’s Theater Feb. 3.

Bottom right, Gaston Middle School’s Alexis Brown places a flower at the bust of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during the annual MLK garlanding ceremony in Courthouse Park on Jan. 17.

At right, King Elementary School’s King African American Dance Troup performs Jan. 17 at the MLK ceremony.

Resource Fair Focuses on Special Education

Fresno Unified’s Adult Transition Program will hold its annual resource fair for individuals with disabilities and their families.

This free event (including parking) will be held from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Friday, March 27 at Chukchansi Park. Parking is across the street on H Street.

The purpose is to connect students with disabilities with community resources that can help with independence and quality of life.

Concessions and food truck items will be available for purchase. It’s an event for the whole family!

Sunnyside High Wins Award for High Numbers of Female Students Taking AP Computer Science Classes

Sunnyside High School has been honored with an Advanced Placement Computer Science Female Diversity Award from the College Board.

Sunnyside was among just 639 out of 20,000 institutions offering AP courses to be recognized with this award.

“Great job to our Sunnyside teams, who are working hard to engage more young women in computer science, preparing them for in-demand, high-paying jobs after graduation,” said Superintendent Bob Nelson.

Sunnyside won the award because it has achieved 50% or higher female representation in its AP computer science courses. The classes are taught by Angela Vincent.

“Sunnyside High school is empowering young women to see themselves as creators, innovators, and problem-solvers,” said Stefanie Sanford, College Board global policy chief. “We hope to see even more high schools inspire female students to harness the potential of an AP computer science education.”

The introduction of AP Computer Science Principles (CSP) in 2016 was the largest course launch in AP Program history. In 2019, nearly 100,000 students took the AP CSP exam, more than doubling participation in three years. During that time, the number of female AP CSP students has far outpaced overall growth, with an increase of 136%.

Providing female students with access to computer science courses is necessary to ensuring gender parity in high-paying technology jobs and to drive innovation, creativity, and competition. A 2014 Google study found that women are more likely to pursue computer science if they are given the opportunity to explore it in high school.
ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF THE UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES (UCP)

To all students, employees, parents or guardians of its students, school and district advisory committee members, appropriate school officials or representatives, and other interested parties:

The Fresno Unified School District has the primary responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable federal laws and regulations and has established Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) to address and resolve any complaints alleging unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying in any district educational programs.

The Fresno Unified School District shall investigate all allegations of unlawful discrimination, discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying against any person in district programs and activities, including, but not limited to, those programs or activities funded directly or by that receive or benefit from any state financial assistance, based on the person’s actual or perceived characteristics of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, ancestry, age, creed, religion, political affiliation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, mental or physical disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy or parental status, medical information, military veteran status, or association with a person or a group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

The UCP shall also be used when addressing complaints alleging failure to comply with state and/or federal laws in:

• Accommodations for Pregnant and Parenting Pupils
• Adult Education
• After School Education and Safety Programs
• Agricultural Career Technical Education
• State and Federal Career Technical Education, Career Technical and Training Programs
• Child Care and Developmental Programs
• Compensatory Education
• Course Periods Without Educational Content
• Education of Pupils (Foster Care, Homeless, former Juvenile Court Pupils, and Children of Military Families)
• Education of Pupils Pursuant to Special Education
• Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP)
• Migrant Education
• Physical Education Instructional Minutes
• Pupil Fees
• Reasonable Accommodations to a Lactating Pupil
• Regional Occupational Centers and Programs
• School Plans for Student Achievement
• School Safety Plans
• School site Councils
• California State Preschool Programs and Health/Safety Issues

A complaint of noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees may be filed pursuant to the local UCP. A pupil fees or LCAP complaint may be filed anonymously if the complainant provides evidence or information leading to evidence to support the complaint. A pupil enrolled in a public school shall not be required to pay a pupil fee for participation in an educational activity.

Complaints of noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees are filed with the principal of a school. A pupil fee complaint shall not be filed later than one year from the date the alleged violation occurred. A pupil fee includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

1. A fee charged to a pupil as a condition for registering for school or classes, or as a condition for participation in a class or an extracurricular activity, regardless of whether the class or activity is elective or compulsory, or is for credit.
2. A security deposit, or other payment, that a pupil is required to make to obtain a lock, locker, book, class apparatus, musical instrument, clothes, or other materials or equipment.
3. A purchase that a pupil is required to make to obtain materials, supplies, or equipment, or clothes associated with an educational activity.

The District shall post a notice of the educational rights of pupils in foster care, pupils who are homeless, former juvenile court pupils now enrolled in a school district, and pupils in military families, as specified in EC sections 48851, 48853.5, 48906.9, 51125.1 and 51125.2. The notice shall include complaint procedure information, as applicable.

In order to identify appropriate subjects of state preschool health and safety issues pursuant to HSC Section 1596.7925, a notice shall be posted in each California state preschool program classroom in each school in the District. The notice shall:

1. State the health and safety requirements under 5 CCR that apply to California state preschool programs pursuant to HSC Section 1596.7925 and (2) state the location at which to obtain a form to file a state preschool health and safety issues complaint pursuant to HSC Section 1596.7925.

Complaints should be filed in writing and signed by the complainant or complaints may be filed anonymously. However, if the complainant wishes to receive a response, the complainant must indicate that a response is required and provide contact information. If a complainant is unable to file the complaint in writing, for example, due to conditions such as a disability or illiteracy, district staff shall assist them in the filing of the complaint.

The Governing Board designates the following compliance officer(s) to receive formal and informal complaints from constituents, including students, and investigate them to ensure district compliance with law (Title II, V, IX, Title 5, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act):

Teresa Plascencia, Executive Director
Title V Compliance Officer
Constituents Services Office
Address: 2309 Tulare Street, Room 218
Fresno, CA 93721
Phone: (559) 457-3736
FAX: (559) 457-3933
Email: Teresa.Plascencia@fresnounified.org

Paul Ivdvoog, Chief of Human Resources
Title IX Officer/Atm/D (Discrimination Act)
Human Resources
Address: 2309 Tulare Street, Fresno, CA 93721
Phone: (559) 457-3730
FAX: (559) 457-3528
Email: Paul.Ivdvoog@fresnounified.org

Brian Beck, Special Education Assistant Superintendent
Special Education Office
Address: 1301 M Street, Fresno, CA 93721
Phone: (559) 457-3226
FAX: (559) 457-3258
Email: Brian.Beck@fresnounified.org

Jeannie Butler, Manager
Section 504 Coordinator
Address: 1301 M Street, Fresno, CA 93721
Phone: (559) 457-3200
FAX: (559) 457-3258
Email: Jeannie.Butler@fresnounified.org

Complaints alleging unlawful discrimination, discriminatory harassment, intimidation or bullying must be filed not later than six (6) months from the date the alleged incident occurred or six months from the date the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination, discriminatory harassment, intimidation or bullying.

The time for filing may be extended for up to 90 days by the Superintendent or designee for good cause upon written request by the complainant setting forth the reasons for the extension. As appropriate for any complaint alleging retaliation, unlawful discrimination, discriminatory harassment, intimidation or bullying, the Superintendent or designee may keep the identity of the complainant confidential to the extent that the investigation of the complaint is not otherwise prohibited. Complainants shall be investigated in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and maintaining the integrity of the process.

Complaints will be investigated, and a written decision or report will be sent to the complainant within sixty (60) calendar days from the date of the receipt of the complaint, unless the complainant agrees in writing to an extension. The Local Educational Agency (LEA) person responsible for investigating the complaint shall conduct and complete the investigation in accordance with sections 4680-4687 and in accordance with local procedures adopted under section 4621.

The complainant has a right to appeal the LEA’s decision to the California Department of Education (CDE) by filing a written appeal within 15 days of receiving the LEA’s decision. Any complaint alleging unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying), the respondent also shall have the right to file an appeal with the CDE in the same manner as the complainant, if they are not satisfied with the district’s decision. The appeal must include a copy of the complaint filed with the LEA and a copy of the LEA’s decision. Civil law remedies may be available under state or federal discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying laws, if applicable. In appropriate cases, an appeal may be filed pursuant to Education Code Section 262.3. A complainant may pursue available civil law remedies outside of the LEA’s complaint procedures. Complainants may seek assistance from education centers or public/private interest attorneys. Civil law remedies, including, but are not limited to, injunctions, restraining orders, other remedies or orders that may be available under state or federal, including discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying laws, if applicable.

The district prohibits retaliation in any form for filing a complaint and shall ensure that complainants or anyone who has acted to uncover or report a violation subject are protected from retaliation. The UCP shall also be used when addressing complaints alleging retaliation against a complainant or other participant in the complaint process. A copy of the Fresno Unified School District’s UCP policy and complaint procedures shall be available free of charge.

Revised: January 29, 2020

www.FresnoUnified.org
DISTRICT ROUNDPUP

Administrator Winners Announced at Dinner

Six educators from Fresno Unified were recently honored at the Association of California School Administrators Consolidated Region 9 awards dinner. Regional winners highlighted Feb. 24 were secondary co-admin, Amy Smith; elementary principal, Bruce Thele; continuation, Carson Wood; classified leader, Mai Yer Vang; Central Office, Julie Severs; President’s Award, Deanna Mathies.

Sandra Toscano Recognized by Scholarship Fund

Sandra Toscano, assistant superintendent for English Learner Services, will receive the Gusmaro and Benarda Reyes 2020 Legacy Award at the fourth annual Reyes Scholarship Dinner on Saturday, March 7. The Gusmaro & Benarda P. Reyes Scholarship is named after the parents of eight children who attended and graduated from Roosevelt High School and awards scholarships to incoming college freshmen based on academic strength and financial need.

Tenaya MS Hosts Walk of Champions

Tenaya Middle School held its second Walk of Champions to honor students and student athletes on Jan. 10. This new tradition celebrates student athletes and teams that won a league championship during that specific quarter with a parade down the main hall, leading to the quad. Teams display their championship plaques and celebrate their great accomplishments with their peers. Walk of Champions also includes Academic Champions, students who have received a 4.0 GPA in both the first and second quarters, along with perfect attendance for the first and second quarters.

District Honors Newly Certified Teachers

Starting in 2015, Fresno Unified developed a support program for teachers who pursued National Board Certification, one of the highest marks of teaching accomplishment. Since the start of the program, 28 teachers have successfully achieved certification. The district recently recognized its newest recipients: Kelly Kilburg, Gabe Lucero, Allyson Maldonado, Tamika Tatum, Sky Sweet, Marcia Vander Poel, and David Wisar.

Edison’s Forensics Team Wins Award

After competing in 12 rounds of debate, spread across three days over the winter break, the Edison Forensics Team was named League Champions of Debate for small schools. Varsity competitors spent the last three months preparing debate cases for both sides of topics such as the use of the SAT on college admissions, subsidies for fossil fuels, the European Union’s membership in China’s Belt and Road Initiative, and the U.S. government’s use of offensive cyber operations.

Edison Hosts AP Rush Day for Eighth Graders

Edison High School hosted the second annual eighth grade AP Rush Day on February 7, geared towards increasing equity and access for African American students. A mentoring program, BSU Love of Learning, was established with this program.

Hooer Football Team Hosts Fundraiser

The Hoover High School football team will hold a mattress sale fundraiser in the Hoover Event Center on Saturday, March 14 from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Through a fundraising company, 27 mattress styles will be available for purchase, with a portion of the proceeds going to the Hoover football team.

Sunnyside Cross Country Champ Commits to FPU

Sunnyside High School’s Jessica Valles committed to Fresno Pacific University in a signing ceremony Feb. 5. Jessica is a three-time cross country Valley champion and placed eighth in the state.

Bullard Hosts Unsung Heroes Photo Display for Black History Month

Bullard High School partnered with Unsung Heroes to host a display in the library of hundreds of photos celebrating African Americans who served in the military. The exhibit was up through February, Black History Month. Unsung Heroes is a non-profit inter-generational project that collects and preserves stories of African Americans’ military experiences.

Tree Fresno Donates Trees to Yosemite MS

Yosemite Middle School students planted about a dozen trees, donated by Tree Fresno, on Feb. 8. Students will care for the trees. Over the past year, the school has lost several trees due to weather and vandalism. Teacher Ted Januse reached out to Tree Fresno to work together and create a “greener” environment and some shady areas for students.

Rata High will Host Fundraiser Dinner

The first Rata High School and Rata Adult Program fundraiser dinner will be held at 6 p.m. on April 3 at the Dante Club. Tickets are $40. The event will feature a silent auction, dessert auction and raffle. For more information, contact Tenisha Sharp at (559) 451-4585.

Elementary Schools Win Attendance Awards

The Successful Simon mascot awarded Golden Owls to schools in each region recently for the highest average daily attendance for the second quarter. Regional winners were Fresno High, Hamilton K-8 School; Edison, Kirk Elementary School; Sunnyside, Aynsworth Elementary School; McLane, Leavenworth and Ewing elementary schools; Bullard, Forkner Elementary School; Hoover, Eaton Elementary School; and Roosevelt, Jackson Elementary School.
Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Programs Enrolling Students

The district is excited to announce enrollment for preschool through kindergarten for the 2020-21 school year. Transitional kindergarten (TK) and kindergarten enrollment will begin on March 9. Preschool and pre-kindergarten enrollment begins April 1.

Parents are urged to consider the district’s high-quality early learning opportunities, which include a limited number of classes for 3-year-olds and pre-kindergarten classes for 4-year-olds at 61 sites across the district, as well as TK and kindergarten classes.

Registration forms became available at the end of February. Families will also have access to the new online registration for kindergarten through sixth grade students who have never attended Fresno Unified School District before. For more information, call (559) 457-3416. Parents of preschool and pre-kindergarten students may schedule an appointment starting March 1. Registration starts April 1.

Enrollment in Fresno Unified preschool has more than doubled in the past seven years, with the number of preschoolers learning in district classrooms expected to top 2,800 in the coming school year. This means that more students are entering kindergarten better prepared, academically and socially. In addition, district staff is able to intervene earlier to help young learners who may struggle.

The district also provides developmental screenings for children participating in play and learn groups. For more information about play and learn groups, call (559) 457-3623.

The district’s after school programs offer academic help and enrichment and recreational activities. The application deadline is April 24 for the 2020-21 school year.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS
Continued from page 2

Ryan Mouanoutoua from the district’s Early Learning Center has fun with an art project in January 2019. Enrollment in preschool and kindergarten starts March 9.

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“Fresno Unified Nutrition Center” npaj muaj ob pluas noj muaj kuab mov txhua hnnb rau cov tub kwam ntawv muab kev koom tes hauv qhov kawm tom qab lbaw ntawv.

Fresno Unified is getting social!

Tag us and share posts!
#FresnoUnifiedIAmReady
@fresnounified
@fresnounified
www.facebook.com/fresnounifiedpage
Get Involved!

The district’s after school programs offer academic help and enrichment and recreational activities. The application deadline is April 24 for the 2020-21 school year.
Summer School Offers Options for Reading, Math, High School Credits

Keeping students on track for graduation, while preparing them for post-secondary education and workplace success, drives the work behind the Fresno Unified Summer School Program.

Last summer, more than 14,000 students participated in learning opportunities outside of the traditional school calendar that allowed them to recover credits for graduation, take part in summer enrichment or continue to develop academic skills gained during the regular school year.

The summer reading program focuses on fundamental reading skills, helping kindergarten through second grade students who need additional instruction in the area of foundational skills to help support reading fluency. The elementary mathematics and science program supports fourth grade students, providing hands-on instruction merging both math and science concepts, connecting students to real-world applications.

Additionally, summer school offers opportunities in literacy and language development for English learners, accelerated learning toward Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) identification, and enrichment programs that focus on hands on science activities.

Classes are available for students entering middle school, as well as enrichment courses through the Center for Advanced Research and Technology (CART). Special education programs are available at all grade levels.

The high school summer program offers credit recovery opportunities in all core areas and courses needed for graduation. Students who wish to open space in their schedules for advanced placement (AP) courses later in their high school career may wish to take advantage of a variety of acceleration options. Counselors will work with students to schedule summer coursework.

Qualified teachers who are committed to providing high-quality academic instruction teach all courses in a safe and structured environment. Letters regarding elementary intervention program placement will be available from your child’s teacher. Parents are encouraged to contact their school site for additional information on summer enrichment opportunities.

Summer programs begin on Tuesday, June 9 and will end on Thursday, July 9. There will be no school on July 3.

Students work on an art project during summer school at Vang Pao Elementary School last July. Summer school will run June 9 through July 9 this year.
Celebrando la Historia Afroamericana y a los Finalistas de Excelencia en Educación

¡Feliz marzo a todos! El mes pasado estuve lleno de tantas celebraciones, ¡y que tomar su tiempo para celebrar a todos y seguir trabajando todos los días! Ésa es la cultura para preparar a nuestros estudiantes para el futuro. Esa es la forma en que estoy comprometido a trabajar todos los días. Esa es la forma en que me mantengo motivado y fuerte cada día. Esa es la forma en que mantiene a nuestro equipo. Ésa es la forma en que nuestros equipos pasan los días estupendos o difíciles. Y por medio de todo esto, nuestros equipos pasan los días de esta manera. Esa es la forma en que nuestros equipos celebran el Mes de la Historia Afroamericana.

Uno de mis eventos favoritos es el Programa Anual del Mes de Historia Afroamericana. Este año pasamos un momento para presumir a nuestras personas! Primero, celebramos a todos y continuamos el gran trabajo en todo nuestro sistema! Segundo, reconocemos a nuestros equipos, personal y equipo de todo nuestro distrito.

De este grupo estelar, se nombraron a 46 finalistas este año. Entre ellos están los que nos dan pie a nuestra formación de profesionales. Estos individuos y las historias de hacer una verdadera diferencia nos inspiran. Somos orgullosos del increíble aprendizaje y la forma en que nuestros estudiantes y el personal de toda la región nos tienen aplausos. Es una maravilla ver a los líderes que tuvieron una actuación increíble. Nuestros estudiantes, los cantantes, los bailarines y los actores nos tienen aplausos. Nuestros estudiantes y el personal tenían las banderas, los globos, el verde, el motown, los deportes, los deportes de Corazón. ¡Pero saber cada día que nuestros estudiantes y el personal de toda la región están perdiendo una de nuestras mejores personas! Primero, celebramos a todos y continúan el gran trabajo en todo nuestro sistema!

Y también, el mes pasado celebramos a los ganadores de los premios de Educador del Año. Los ganadores del Año del Condado de Fresno. Los 46 finalistas este año representaron tantas piezas increíbles y cruciales para el rompecabezas que es el Distrito Escolar Unificado de Fresno. Sin estas personas, nuestro distrito no sería lo que es hoy día.

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